



## Bi-Weekly Drought Brief Monday, October 27, 2014

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### **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

**Drought Winter Forecast:** California's record-breaking drought will likely persist in many parts of the state this winter and could intensify in some areas, according to a newly released three-month winter forecast by the [National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center](#) released on Friday, October 17. Drought conditions are expected to improve in California's southern and northwestern regions, but complete drought recovery in California this winter is highly unlikely as the remainder of the state is expected to remain unseasonably dry.

More than half of California is suffering from exceptional drought – the worst category according to the U.S. Drought Monitor – with 2013 being the driest year on record. In addition to being exceptionally dry, California has experienced unseasonably warm weather with 2012 and 2013 ranking in the top 10 of its warmest years. The calendar year 2014 is shaping up to be California's warmest year on record.

**Fire Activity:** CAL FIRE has responded to 5,373 wildfires across the state since January 1, burning 92,027 acres in state responsibility areas. This year's fire activity is above the year-to-date average of 4,399 wildfires on 88,934 acres. CAL FIRE responded to over 50 new wildfires last week.

**Reservoir Levels (% capacity):** [Reservoir Levels](#) as of October 23 remain low, including: Don Pedro 37%; Exchequer 10%; Folsom Lake 32%; Lake Oroville 28%; Millerton Lake 34%; New Melones 22%; Pine Flat 11%; San Luis 20%; Lake Shasta 24%; and Trinity Lake 23%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

**Vulnerable Water Systems:** The State Water Board's [Drinking Water Program](#) continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state to determine if new support is needed. As of this week, a total to date of over \$13.3 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March for this purpose.

**Recent Precipitation:** California experienced scattered amounts of precipitation during the latest storm system. Precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, October 20 through Monday, October 27:

- **Oroville:** 1.24"
- **Pacific House:** 0.64"
- **Redding:** 1.24"
- **Shasta Dam:** 4.40"
- **Willits:** 2.44"
- **Sacramento:** 0.09"

\*\* This rainfall will have minimal effect on California's drought conditions, and reservoir water levels will remain largely unchanged. Due to low water supplies from the two previous dry years, California remains in drought conditions. \*\*

**El Niño Predictions and Outlook:** According to the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center, weather forecasters aren't ruling out the possibility of an El Niño weather pattern developing this winter, but predict that if such a weather pattern were to occur, it would be weak, offering little precipitation to quench drought-parched regions of the state.

## **KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK**

- **Governor Brown Says Water Will Be a Top Priority in Coming Term:** During the Stanford University Water Policy Forum on Monday, October 20, Governor Brown announced that [water policy](#) will be a top priority during his next term as governor, and added that he predicts Californians will embrace conservation and innovative water policy in the same way they have become national leaders in renewable energy.
- **CDFA Awards \$3.6 Million to Assist Farmers with Drought through SWEEP:** On Monday, October 20, the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced that the [State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program \(SWEEP\)](#) has awarded \$3.6 million to 93 different projects that implement on-farm water irrigation systems to reduce water and energy use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). These projects allow farmers to continue production while reducing the amount of water and energy used, which results in a more efficient farming operation with multiple benefits including water conservation and reduced GHG emissions.

The funding for SWEEP is part of the emergency drought Legislation (SB 103) signed earlier this year by Governor Brown – authorizing CDFA to distribute as much as \$10 million for eligible projects. A second solicitation of SWEEP proposals is already underway, with grant awards up to \$150,000 per project. More information on the next round can be found by visiting the [SWEEP program webpage](#).

- **Los Angeles Mayor Issues Executive Order to Conserve Water and Reduce Water Imports:** On Tuesday, October 14, the Los Angeles Mayor [issued an executive order](#) on water conservation to address the drought and reduce the city's use of imported water. The [directives](#) require the city to achieve a 20% reduction in potable water use by 2017, a 50% reduction in water purchases by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) by 2024, and the creation of an integrated water strategy to increase water supply and improve water security.
- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 314,740 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 265,100 boxes of food have been picked up by 141,071 households. By this Friday, October 31, an additional 9,600 will be delivered to four counties. Local food banks continue to target this food aid to residents most impacted by the drought.

The non-profit group La Cooperativa continues to distribute the \$10 million state-funded emergency rental assistance to impacted families and individuals across counties most impacted by the drought.

As of Thursday, October 16, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$6,789,225 is committed; and \$5,149,586 in funds has been issued to 3,407 applicants in 20 counties.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) has created a \$600,000 program to help families pay their water bills. This program targets families through 10 agencies that are experiencing “exceptional” drought. As of Friday, October 17, CSD has reported that a total of \$162,321 has been issued to 1,078 households.

CSD has also implemented a \$400,000 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, in coordination with the California Human Development (CHD), Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), Center for Employment Training (CET) and Proteus, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. As of Friday, October 17, 83 clients are enrolled in employment training programs, 9 clients have obtained employment, and 67 clients are receiving employment support services. CSD has also reported that a total of \$206,307 has been spent to assist participants in completing training employment programs.

- **Public Water Systems Curtailment Compliance Orders:** On Friday, October 17, the State Water Board, Division of Drinking Water has issued compliance orders to the [22 community public water systems](#) that have continued to divert water affected by curtailments to meet basic public health and safety needs. The orders will bring these systems into compliance by imposing strict limitations on the use of water, prohibiting new water service connections to residence and businesses in the service area, and require metering for all customers until the public water system can demonstrate they have acquired an alternative water source with proven long-term reliability.
- **Eel River Watershed Curtailments Temporarily Lifted During Latest Storm Event:** The State Water Board has issued a notice of temporary opportunity to divert water under previously curtailed rights for the [Eel River Watershed](#) (North Fork Eel River and Mainstem Eel River above the South Fork Confluence), which temporarily lifts the water rights curtailment for post-1914 water rights holders. The temporary lifting of curtailments is based on a predicted rain event beginning Friday, October 24. All diversions during this time period must be in accordance with the State Water Board's October 3, 2014 letter and lyrics notification.
- **State Water Board to Hold Workshops on Draft Safe Drinking Water Plan for California:** The State Water Board will sponsor a series of [workshops](#) throughout the state in coming weeks to present an overview of the draft [Safe Drinking Water Plan](#) for California. The plan includes the State Water Board's assessment of the overall quality of the state's drinking water, analysis of specific water problems and known and potential health risks associated with contaminated drinking water, and recommendations for improving water quality. Members of the public are invited to comment on the document by noon on Monday, December 15.
- **DWR Sponsors IRWM Workshops throughout State on November 6:** The Department of Water Resources will sponsor several [workshops](#) throughout the state on Thursday, November 6, that is intended to provide tools and resources to Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) stakeholders. The workshops will have a particular focus on the needs of tribes, disadvantaged communities and local agencies, but all IRWM stakeholders are welcome.
- **Desert Water Agency Reports a Nearly 11% Reduction in Water Production for September:** On Wednesday, October 15, the Desert Water Agency (DWA) announced that its' customers [cut back on water](#) use by almost 11% during September of this year compared with the same month last year, indicating that the agency's conservation programs are working. DWA has taken action and invested in a number of water-saving programs that have enabled the agency to achieve this continued reduction in water production.

- **SDCWA Kicks Off Water-Saving Promotion with U-T San Diego:** San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) on Wednesday, October 15, kicked off a 'Water-Saving Superstar' promotion with U-T San Diego asking county residents to create an online video that provides tips for water savings such as reusing water in novel ways, making lifestyle changes to conserve water, creating innovative devices to capture rainwater, trimming water use at work or at home and inspiring neighbors or colleagues to cut their water use.

The Water-Saving Superstar promotion is part of SDCWA's regional campaign, "[When in Drought: Save every day, every way.](#)" Partly funded by grant money from the state Department of Water Resources, the campaign includes ads, public service announcements, online communications and drought reminders provided by community partners in public places such as San Diego International Airport and Petco Park.

- **Water Saving Tips Promoted Across the State:** The state's newly improved water conservation website, [SaveOurWater.com](#), is promoting the "Don't Waste Summer" campaign. This campaign provides a new conservation tip each day for the 100 days of summer. Supporters can sign up for daily email tips, and share Save Our Water's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) feeds for this public awareness campaign.
- **Statewide Open Burn Ban Update:** Due to recent rain in some parts of Northern California, several local burns have been lifted. However, a majority of the state remains under a burn ban due to drought conditions. The [burn ban](#) prohibits certain outdoor burning in the State Responsibility Area (SRA). For those areas where the ban has been lifted, daily fire and weather conditions will dictate whether burning is permissible that day.
- **Drought Response Funding:** \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated in March through emergency legislation continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. Over \$61 million of this funding addresses emergency water needs, food aid and housing assistance to drought-impacted communities. Nearly \$21 million of those funds are already in communities providing assistance and additional funds are being readied as drought impacts worsen. Nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, state agencies have expedited grant approvals, getting over \$21 million immediately allocated to grantees that were pre-approved for certain projects. As planned in March, the next \$200 million of expedited capital funding will be awarded this fall, with the remaining \$250 million granted by mid next-year. State government has also appropriated tens of millions in funding to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enable staffing-up fire crews much earlier this fire season.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

## **Local Government**

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 60 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:

- **26 Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Napa, Plumas, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba, and El Dorado.
- **13 Cities:** City of Willits (Mendocino County), City of St. Helena (Napa County), City of Calistoga (Napa County), City of American Canyon (Napa County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of Rio Dell (Humboldt County), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County).
- **9 Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), and Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County).
- **12 Special Districts:** Brooktrails Township (Mendocino County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Stanislaus County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County).
- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies (AWCA) [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.
- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 30 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 2 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt Counties).

## **DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### **[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse**

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)  
Local Government, [Drought Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)

California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)

California Department of Water Resources, [Current Water Conditions](#)

California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)

California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)

California State Water Project, [Information](#)

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Current Conditions throughout the Region

[U.S. Drought Portal](#), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)

National Weather Service [Climate Predictor Center](#)

USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)

USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)

U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance Office: [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster)